

CLAIMS

1. A surgical dissector, comprising:
 - a) an elongate shaft having a proximal end and a distal end;
 - b) a blunt dissection tip positioned on the distal end of the elongate shaft;
and
 - c) a light source emitting a visible energy from the blunt tip.
2. The surgical dissector of claim 1, wherein the diffuse visible energy is diffuse.
3. The surgical dissector of claim 1, further comprising functional component means on the shaft.
4. The surgical dissector of claim 1, wherein the shaft has a circular cross-section at the tip.
5. The surgical dissector of claim 1, wherein the shaft is rigid.
6. The surgical dissector of claim 1, wherein the shaft is articulated.
7. The surgical dissector of claim 1, wherein the shaft is curved.
8. The surgical dissector of claim 1, wherein the diffuse visible energy has sufficient luminous intensity to pass through tissue.
9. The surgical dissector of claim 8, wherein the luminous intensity is greater than about 300 lux.
10. The surgical dissector of claim 9, wherein the luminous intensity is less than about 1500 lux.
11. The surgical dissector of claim 1, wherein the visible energy is white light.
12. The surgical dissector of claim 1, wherein the light is an LED.

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2 13. A method of separating a first tissue from a second tissue using the surgical
3 dissector of claim 1, comprising the steps of:

- 4 a) positioning blunt dissection tip near the first and second tissues;
5 b) separating the first and second tissues by moving blunt dissection tip
6 between the first and second tissues, wherein the first or second
7 tissues obstruct the operator's sight of the dissection tip; and
8 c) visually locating the tip by observing the diffuse visible energy passing
9 through the obstructing tissue.

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11 14. The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of differentiating tissue by
12 observing the diffuse visible energy passing through the first or second tissues.

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14 15. A method of separating a first tissue from a second tissue, comprising the
15 steps of:

- 16 a) positioning a blunt tipped dissector near the first and second tissues;
17 b) separating the first and second tissues by moving the blunt tipped
18 dissector between the first and second tissues, wherein the first or
19 second tissues obstruct the operator's sight of the dissector tip;
20 c) emitting a diffuse light from the dissector tip while positioned between
21 the first and second tissues; and
22 d) visually locating the tip of the dissector by observing the light passing
23 through the obstructing tissue.

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25 16. The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of differentiating tissue by
26 observing the light passing through the first or second tissues.

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28 17. A blunt tipped dissector for performing the method of claim 15.

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30 18. The method of claim 15, wherein the steps are performed sequentially.

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32 19. A method of separating a first tissue from a second tissue, comprising the
33 steps of:

- 34 a) positioning a blunt tipped dissector near the first and second tissues;

- b) separating the first and second tissues by moving the blunt tipped dissector between the first and second tissues;
- c) emitting a diffuse light from the blunt tip of the dissector while positioned between the first and second tissues; and
- d) differentiating tissue by observing the light passing through the first or second tissues.

20. A blunt tipped dissector for performing the method of claim 19.

21. The method of claim 19, wherein the steps are performed sequentially.